
Where now for teacher education? Stakeholder views of the aims of education and initial teacher education programmes in New Zealand

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Abstract

Initial teacher education (ITE) programmes must take into account much more than just the current school curricula; they must also prepare student teachers for entry into a teaching environment that is likely to be very different from whence they came. At the same time, funding constraints, quality standards and potentially opposed stakeholder expectations provide an ongoing challenge.

The New Zealand school system is undergoing major change as it introduces a new national curriculum focussed on outcomes. This new curriculum requires schools to design and review their own curricula within the framework of national philosophy and guidelines rather than according to prescriptions relating to the subjects that make up the curriculum. New Ministry of Education initiatives targeting senior students and Māori and Pasifika students require teachers to keep what is best for the student at the forefront of their teaching and decision-making. ITE programmes must ensure these considerations are evident in their overarching philosophy, course structure and practice.

Teacher education programmes at the University of Canterbury are currently under review. As part of this process, we used the international Teacher Education for the Future project to help us identify aspects of the programmes needing attention. We asked stakeholders (teachers, student teachers and teacher educators) to rank the aims of education and their preferred future focus for ITE programmes. This paper reports the findings and discusses their implication for the design and facilitation of the university's ITE courses.

Introduction

At the end of 2007 the New Zealand Ministry of Education released a new curriculum for schooling in New Zealand. Schools are now required to design and review their own curricula in line with the national philosophy and guidelines of this document. The new curriculum does not prescribe content for subjects that make up the curriculum. Instead, schools derive their own content and teaching programmes according to the needs of their students at each level. The curriculum also shows a shift in attention towards student learning as the primary concern. Alongside its release of the new curriculum, the Ministry of Education has developed several initiatives that target senior students and Māori and Pasifika students and focus on teaching with individual students' needs in mind. Teacher education programmes must ensure these student-centred considerations are evident in their overarching philosophy, course structure and practice.

Teacher education programmes at the University of Canterbury are currently under review. As part of this process, we used the Teacher Education for the Future Project to help us identify aspects of the programmes needing attention. (For a description of this project, see Method below.) We asked stakeholders (teachers, student teachers and teacher educators) to rank the aims of education and their preferred future focus for initial teacher education (ITE)

programmes. This paper reports the findings of this study and discusses the implications of these for the design and facilitation of the university's ITE courses.

Before doing this, however, we outline the New Zealand context and describe the current Ministry initiatives that need to be taken into account when reviewing ITE programmes. We also discuss the degree of professional choice that is characteristic of education in New Zealand for early childhood and school settings.

The research process for the project reported here used a futures approach in that it indicated possible focus ideas for participants and asked them to rank their top 10 ideas. This approach required participants to consider their present experience, likely educational challenges and changes, and how these could, and should, be taken into account during implementation of ITE programmes. A limitation of using a futures approach is that we can make predictions and recommendations based only on the participants' perceptions. However, in our discussion we attempt to align these perceptions with current Ministry initiatives and selected literature and to propose some recommendations for consideration in the final section.

The New Zealand context

The nature of schools and schooling

Throughout their careers, New Zealand teachers often find themselves teaching in several very different schooling contexts, such as co-educational, single-sex, private, bilingual, and rural or urban. In New Zealand, individual schools are self-managing: they develop their own mission statements and have their own governing body (board of trustees). The board of trustees is responsible for hiring staff, funding resources and determining how the curriculum will be delivered. Each school can therefore emphasise slightly different goals if they consider these are important for their students.

New Zealand schools tend to have a very high degree of diversity among the learners within a single class (Ministry of Education, 2000). Meeting the needs of individuals within a class has therefore been a focus of the education system for the last six years or so. Considering that the population is becoming more diverse as a result of immigration, one of the key issues for teaching in New Zealand schools in the future will be determining how best to meet the needs of individual learners, many of whom come from (and may still live in) different cultural environments. Pre-service teacher educators are required by the New Zealand Teachers' Council (NZTC) to provide a sufficient range of content and experiences to prepare teachers for these often very different employment situations.

There has also been a call for teachers in New Zealand to be more aware of the holistic, interactive and inductive nature of teaching (Grainger, 2003). Grainger's call implies that teachers of the future need to be conversant with content, be aware of a range of possible pedagogies, and know when it is appropriate to use particular teaching and learning strategies. It also implies that teachers need to be flexible when teaching—that they need to be able to adapt and change throughout a lesson depending on the responses and interest of their students or depending on the availability of resources. Moreover, teachers need to clarify, for their students, ideas that are not well understood or create additional opportunities and experiences to reinforce learning. These notions are consistent with ideas that have been emerging internationally over the last decade or so. In summary, these ideas hold that teaching is a personal profession which is complex, unpredictable, and dynamic (Fitzsimons & Fenwick, 1997), and that the teacher therefore needs to have the skills to respond to the unique set of circumstances he or she encounters each day in the classroom.

Social and cultural influences, such as immigration, also affect teaching and learning. The cultural diversity of students in New Zealand schools has been increasing steadily as people have emigrated from Asian-Pacific and European countries to New Zealand. We also have an

education system that promotes mainstreaming of special education needs students. The development of relationship skills and understanding of identity are critical in a multi-cultural society. Thus, student-centred learning methods are likely to become more prevalent, especially given the increasing emphasis on learners enhancing their skills and knowledge through collaborations with others. There is also an identified need (Ministry of Education, 2000) to help learners develop skills in controlling their own learning and their skills of memorization and elaboration. These methods align with greater self-awareness and reflection, as ways to help learners become more autonomous, more self-directed and to think critically about what they are being taught and are learning (Conner, 2003; Gunstone & Northfield, 1994).

Current teacher education programmes in New Zealand

ITE in New Zealand, at the present time, provides curriculum knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of child development. It also includes, to varying degrees, aspects of psychology and sociology alongside professional practice experience. These aspects tend to be driven by government-produced curriculum documents for early childhood education and schooling that, as mentioned above, are overviews of the government's vision for education, as well as compendiums of the values driving the vision and of the key competencies and learning areas featured in curriculum programmes. The documents do not indicate how teachers should teach nor do they provide an indication of the extent to which different aspects should be emphasised. There are national resource bank assessments for different curriculum areas at multiple levels, but the national standard assessments for qualifications (i.e., those that contribute to the National Certificates in Educational Achievement) apply only to Years 11, 12, and 13. For details, please see www.ncea.govt.nz.

School resources

A huge array of text and online resources has also been produced to support schooling, particularly by the government publisher of school-based resources, Learning Media, as well as by independent publishers. Teaching and learning in New Zealand schools is therefore guided by a range of support materials, created by the Ministry of Education, as well as many resources created by teachers and private enterprise. There are no set national textbooks for any subject. Teachers choose what resources they want to use and it is up to the schools to use their resource funding to support what teachers want. Teachers thus have considerable professional freedom to select resources appropriate for their students and the lessons that they themselves design for their classes. While teachers see this freedom as empowering, it also requires considerable effort and sound professional judgment on their part as to what is appropriate. Part of the role of ITE is to enable student teachers to become familiar with the existing curricula, possible pedagogies and the wide range of resources they can access.

Lesson planning

The expected roles of teachers in New Zealand include designing and implementing teaching and learning activities in response to what their students already know and can do. This requires teachers to evaluate prior knowledge and skills, and from there provide students with opportunities to experience appropriate tasks that will extend their learning. Increasingly, students are also being given the opportunity to reflect on how they learn and what they need to do to improve their learning (Claxton, 2002; Conner, 2005). As Gilbert (2005, p. 212) observes when commenting on knowledge acquisition in New Zealand schools:

We no longer need the knowledge, skills and dispositions our schools are set up to provide ... Schools are no longer people's main source of knowledge, and teachers are not the important authority figures they once were. Teachers, like many other professional groups, are now service providers (and it is now common for the consumers of these services to question their quality).

In New Zealand, teachers are expected to be flexible by designing and adapting lessons that are appropriate for their students, rather than reproducing lessons that have been prescribed (designed by someone else) or following a set sequence based on commonly accepted pre-designed programmes. This requires teachers in New Zealand to plan carefully and be prepared to modify their plans even during a lesson. The key idea is that teachers are expected to plan their own lessons in terms of relevance, content and skills that are appropriate for the students in their classes. In general the teaching and learning experiences are interactive, with students contributing and sharing their ideas amongst themselves, in small groups, as much as or more than with the teacher. There is a shift towards communities of learners as described by Stoll, Fink, and Earl (2003).

The mode of delivering ITE in New Zealand tends to model the teaching and learning processes described above, by providing small group, interactive experiences for student teachers. Where possible, in course work, links are made between appropriate pedagogies and learning theories. Critical reflection on the teaching and learning processes is integrated throughout all courses. As Stoll et al. (2003) maintain, teachers increasingly perceive themselves as life-long learners. They observe that: "Teachers can play a critical role in creating schools for learning as a move towards their preferred futures. How? By being consummate learners themselves" (p. 75).

Curricular considerations

New Zealand's revised national curriculum, released by the Ministry of Education in 2007, is to be implemented in schools by 2010. As previously mentioned, rather than prescribing content and what teachers and schools must "deliver", the curriculum focuses on *learning* outcomes and provides the underlying philosophy, guidelines and framework within which schools can creatively and actively design and review their own curricula. Specifically, the Ministry document provides a vision, overarching values, key competencies and learning areas. The philosophy and competencies are integrally bound with multiple dimensions associated with learning, such as fostering a disposition to learn, meta-learning, empowering students to become experts on their own learning, and embedding learning in rich learning contexts. Teachers are seen as *promoters* of learning (Conner, 2004) rather than *transmitters* of knowledge. This fundamental emphasis in the curriculum has implications for the content and delivery of ITE programmes, and those of us involved in teacher education programmes at the University of Canterbury are not alone in having to review pre-service education programmes so that they accommodate, model and assist these changing notions of teaching and learning.

In reviewing our qualifications and courses, we have to take account not only of the revised curriculum document but also of Ministry of Education initiatives and other parameters that are influencing, and will continue to influence, development of an ideal programme. These "other parameters" include external agency requirements, such as those stipulated by the NZTC, the expectations of stakeholders, such as early childhood educators and school principals, and university-related factors (e.g., funding, time, staff expertise).

Ministry of Education initiatives

The following three Ministry initiatives have been developed to address specific student issues in New Zealand schools. Students in ITE programmes need to be aware of these initiatives and of how these influence the development of in-school programmes.

- *Schools Plus*: This 2008 initiative is being developed in the light of relatively low retention rates of New Zealanders in education up to the age of 18 years. It advocates an inter-agency approach whereby each student has an individual education plan that can be flexibly implemented in a variety of institutions and employment situations. Full implementation of *Schools Plus* is expected to occur between 2011 and 2013.

- *Ka Hikitia (2008–2012)*: The Ministry launched this five-year strategy in response to the relatively low retention and achievement rates of Māori in New Zealand schools. It focuses on research-based evidence of successful strategies that enhance the achievement of Māori. It also specifies the principles of inclusion, aspirations for the success of Māori in education, and the acceptance by New Zealand society that Māori may want to be educated as Māori.
- *The Pasifika Education Plan, 2006–2010*: This provides strategic direction for coordinating all policies that aim to improve educational outcomes for Pasifika peoples. The plan's success relies on Pasifika families and communities, education services, and government working together.

The New Zealand Teachers' Council

The New Zealand Teachers' Council (NZTC, 2005) has high expectations for ITE programmes. These are apparent in its prescribed requirements for teaching practices as well as in the standards the council expects graduates to meet. The NZTC, in association with the New Zealand Ministry of Education, also determines the entry-level qualifications for students enrolling into teacher qualifications.

Stakeholders

In conversations and in more formal settings, principals and practising teachers frequently express their expectations that student teachers will have high levels of initial competence in both class management and curriculum delivery, perhaps forgetting their own basic competencies, fears and misgivings when they first started teaching. In addition, the expectations of some stakeholders can be at odds with the expectations of others. Schools generally require beginning teachers to be equipped to teach a range of curriculum areas, whereas student teachers may prefer to limit their options to their areas of strength. Early childhood centres and schools limit the number of student teachers on teaching practice at any one time, whereas our teacher educator colleagues prefer to see more student teachers in the one location because this approach offers greater effectiveness in regard to student support and advice (pers. com.).

Everyone has been taught at some stage in their lives, and this enables them to add their own comments on, and expectations of, how modern teaching professionals should be prepared. Comments tend to reflect a nostalgic and simplistic view of schools as they once were and to which many would like to see a return, rather than the much more complex environment that teachers face now. Politicians, too, are not above using populist educational strategies and comment to court voters or attack opposing political parties, especially in election years.

There is an assumption that effective ITE will solve many of the issues regarding the quality of teachers and education in general. While ITE provides opportunities to enable change in teachers, teaching, and education in general, there are many other forces that limit the degree of possible change (Fullan, 2007), such as teacher efficacy, teacher educators' professional development, and other organisational constraints, particularly those within the university.

Constraints within the university

The merging of colleges of education with universities has meant a loss of the autonomy that the colleges once had. Within the university environment, there are competing demands on faculty for teaching and research outputs. The drive for increasing research outputs through New Zealand's Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF) scheme that the Tertiary Education Commission uses to determine (in part) funding of tertiary institutions, is reducing the time staff can spend on course renewal, innovative teaching and in face-to-face sessions with students. As well, universities are facing financial constraints in some teacher education qualifications due to declining enrolments and the costs associated with placing students in centres and schools throughout New Zealand on teaching practices.

In bringing about the transformation of teacher education required to prepare teachers to meet the demands of the 21st century, we need to consider carefully what changes will have the most immediate results. What is really valued? How can we best portray this to student teachers? How can we inspire teacher development? How can we respond to educational changes and initiatives or assist educational change? And how can all of these be implemented within the constraints of decreasing student/educator contact time and larger class sizes?

Currently, those of us developing teacher education programmes at the University of Canterbury are considering what structures, content, skills and dispositions contribute to developing excellence in teaching, and whether these align with systemic changes in teaching in early childhood centres and primary and secondary schools and fit within our organisational constraints. If we can identify what excellence in teaching involves, we are more likely to aim for and focus on, those areas that truly make a difference. As Hattie (2003) points out, teachers can, of course, have a huge influence on school student learning. He goes on to say:

We need to ensure that this greatest influence is optimized to have powerful and sensationally positive effects on the learner. Teachers can and usually do have positive effects, but they must have *exceptional effects*. We need to direct attention to higher quality teaching, and higher expectations that students can meet appropriate challenges (Hattie, 2003, p. 3, emphasis ours).

In order to implement the intentions of the Ministry of Education through the range of initiatives above, it will not be enough for us to provide programmes that help teachers shift the ways they behave, or the ways they think. Rather, we will need to help them shift the ways they *know*—to effect what various commentators refer to as an “epistemological shift” (see, for example, Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008; Gilbert, 2005). This change includes considering knowledge not as a commodity but for what the knowledge can enable such as critical evaluation and creative thinking to make new connections. Accomplishing this aim also means shifting teachers’ perceptions about how to promote active learning (engaged thinking) and how to develop relationships with learners that impact on all other areas, including the way teachers perceive themselves. In short, ITE must prepare new teachers for developing different ways of knowing.

Research Questions

A number of questions relative to the nature and content of ITE programmes emerge from the above considerations. What shifts in programmes are necessary so that our future teachers can understand and meet the needs of students within 21st century educational and societal contexts? What kinds of pedagogical processes might help with this shift? What are the limitations, challenges and/or issues arising out of efforts designed to foster these pedagogical processes in our teacher education programmes and to implement them in our schools? These questions underpinned construction of the questionnaire used in this study to survey various teacher education stakeholders about what the aims of education in New Zealand should be and, therefore, what forthcoming ITE programmes should include.

Method

Survey respondents were drawn from students studying towards the University of Canterbury Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning courses, from ITE tutors at the University of Canterbury, and teachers at seven high schools throughout the South Island of New Zealand who mentor students during their teaching practices in their schools. All together, 104 people agreed to take part in the survey. They included 23 teachers, 10 teacher educators, and 71

student teachers. Pre-service teacher educators are required by the NZTC to provide a sufficient range of content and experiences to prepare teachers for often very different employment situations. Ten high schools were invited to participate in the survey; each school was provided with 10 copies of the questionnaire, and these were distributed to the staff who had volunteered to complete them. These respondents represented a cross-section of high school staff in terms of age and gender. Student teachers were enrolled in the one-year secondary Graduate Diploma programme. These students were given the questionnaire in class time and invited to complete it. Sixty per cent of those who responded were male. The median age was 28 years. A copy was distributed to all the secondary teacher education tutors (25) and 10 of them completed and returned it.

Data collection, which involved administering questionnaires, was carried out in April and May 2007. Ethical approval was obtained for this study from the university's College of Education. The questionnaire was made up of 53 items that focused on the aims of education and future focuses for teacher education. These items were drawn from the first phase of the multinational Teacher Education for the Future Project (Conner & Greene, 2006). During this phase, participant researchers developed survey items based on factors considered important by those participating in focus group sessions conducted in seven different countries (Australia, Fiji, Korea, Latvia, New Zealand, Samoa and the United States of America). The items were tagged alphabetically as indicated in the results in Table 1.

Respondents were asked to rank order, from a list of 29 aims and purposes of education and 24 areas of potential emphasis in ITE, the 10 items for each list that most closely aligned with their personal beliefs. Participants were also asked to write comments in response to questions about how they implemented their stated beliefs regarding the purposes of education within their classrooms, what obstacles and supports they encountered, and how teacher education programmes could assist future teachers incorporate their preferred objectives.

When analysing the data, we weighted the numerical responses to reflect the participants' rankings. Thus, the items that participants ranked number one were awarded a weight of five, items ranked number two were given a weighting of four, and so on. The items with the highest totals established the highest ranked items for participant groups and for participants overall. We clustered the participants' comments according to themes related to each question and then summarized these under more broadly based themes.

Results and Discussion

Aims of education

Table 1 presents, for each stakeholder group, the five items from the 28 possible aims and purposes of education in the questionnaire that were accorded top ranking. As can be seen from the table, the three groups all rated (d), (i) and (f) in their top five items for the aims and purposes of education. Teacher educators were the only ones to rate (b) *Secure in students the skills for independent living*, while teachers were the only ones to rate (n) *Prepare students to be productive members of society*. Only student teachers rated (e) *Increase students' motivation to learn* amongst their top five items.

Table 1. Stakeholders' top-ranked aims and purposes of education

Item Rank	Teachers (N = 23)	Teacher Educators (N = 10)	Student Teachers (N = 71)
1	(d) Help students acquire academic skills.	(d) Help students acquire academic skills.	(e) Increase students' motivation to learn.
2	(g) Prepare students to be critical thinkers.	(i) Discover/facilitate the realisation of each student's human potential.	(g) Prepare students to be critical thinkers.
3	(i) Discover/facilitate the realisation of each student's human potential.	(o) Develop students' respect for the values and beliefs of others.	(d) Help students acquire academic skills.
4	(f) Prepare students to be rational problem solvers and rational thinkers.	(f) Prepare students to be rational problem solvers and rational thinkers. (b) Secure in students the skills for independent living.	(f) Prepare students to be rational problem solvers and rational thinkers.
5	(n) Prepare students to be productive members of society.		(i) Discover/facilitate the realisation of each student's human potential.

Teacher education of the future

The sets of five items on the future focus of teacher education accorded top ranking by the respective stakeholder groups are set out in Table 2. All groups rated (d), (k) and (v) amongst their top five items. Teachers were the only ones who included (i) *respond to technical changes* and (a) *establish a balance between academic and non-academic needs of student* amongst their top five items.

Table 2. Stakeholders' top-ranked items regarding the future focus for ITE

Item Rank	Teachers (N = 23)	Teacher Educators (N = 10)	Student Teachers (N = 71)
1	(d) Employ student-centred approaches.	(v) Be better prepared for teaching critical thinking.	(d) Employ student-centred approaches.
2	(k) Adapt or change instructional strategies and delivery modes.	(d) Employ student-centred approaches.	(v) Be better prepared for teaching critical thinking.
3	(v) Be better prepared for teaching critical thinking.	(r) Promote equity and opportunity for all students.	(h) Encourage a sense of community and belonging in the classroom.
4	(i) Respond to technical changes.	(n) Instil respect, tolerance and empathy for other cultures. (h) Encourage a sense of community and belonging in the classroom.	(k) Adapt or change instructional strategies and delivery modes.
5	(a) Establish a balance between academic and non-academic needs of students.		(r) Promote equity and opportunity for all students.

The rankings of items for both categories (aims and purposes of education and future focus of ITE) indicated that stakeholders were placing a high priority on critical thinking. Student teachers and teachers ranked *prepare students to be critical thinkers* second relative to the “aims and purposes of education”. *Better prepared for teaching critical thinking* was ranked second by student teachers, first by teacher educators and third by teachers in regard to “teacher education for the future”. These results align closely with the spirit and intent of New Zealand education policy and curriculum development, which place a high emphasis on independent and life-long learning. “Thinking” is one of the key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007).

However, under the “aims and purposes of education”, teachers and teacher educators ranked *help students acquire academic skills* first, while student teachers ranked it third. When considering “teacher education for the future”, teachers gave fifth-place ranking to *establish a balance between academic and non-academic needs of students*. These results are telling given that New Zealand’s assessment framework has presumably removed the distinctions that previously existed between academic and non-academic courses. It is also interesting within the context of new understandings about knowledge (Gilbert, 2005).

The student teachers and teacher educators tended to place a higher priority than the teachers on social values (*encourage a sense of community and belonging in the classroom; promote equity and opportunity for all students; instil respect, tolerance and empathy for other cultures*). The teachers tended to place greater emphasis on focused approaches to teaching.

Despite the impact of technology on teaching and learning that has taken place over recent years, and the ongoing emphasis on this in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007), *respond to technological changes* was ranked fourth by teachers but was not ranked in the top five by either teacher educators or students.

Overall, the rankings indicated a very clear commitment from all three groups in both questionnaires to meeting the needs of students. This acknowledgement reflects the advocacy of the ministerial initiatives (above), which emphasize the importance of meeting the needs of individual students as opposed to a corresponding lack of emphasis on the collective needs of society as a whole.

Participants’ comments

The small size of the teacher educator participant group (10) meant that it was often difficult to find more than two similar comments from within this group. As such, the themes set down for this group could change markedly with bigger sample sizes. Similarly, because the student teachers and the teacher educators were drawn from just one institution, their views may reflect the views of that institution rather than the views of a wider participant group. Care should obviously be taken in extrapolating these findings to teacher education in general.

The aims of education

Across the three groups, the most common comments regarding the aims of education were *students needing to have respect for others, students having the ability to listen and communicate well, and teachers being able to meet students’ individual needs*. Several student teachers commented on the need for students to have a better appreciation for art, culture and music; however, the drama/music/art background of the responding students may have influenced such comments. Teacher educators emphasised the need to link learning to authentic practices in the real world while teachers considered the ability to communicate with others as important.

Alignment of teaching practice with beliefs about the aims of education

Most students seemed to be generally supportive of the idea that they could action their beliefs in the classroom. Their comments also showed a close match between their own beliefs and

their practice in the classroom while on practicums. These comments from two of the students are typical.

My teaching practice reflects my strongest belief in that if you can help students develop self-confidence, understanding and appreciation of others (and other cultures), these will help them become more productive members of society.

I strongly believe in student motivation so that they are engaged in the learning emotionally. By including a lot of class discussion and questioning, letting them know and feel that they are in a safe environment to talk about feelings and share their opinions, I want to empower them so that they can learn independently.

Only two students gave slightly negative comments in this regard. One mentioned that the somewhat formulaic action to take with students deemed unproductive classroom members—warnings and then sit outside the deputy principal's office—appeared to be at odds with her desire to engage on a personal level. The other said that because she had experienced only one teaching practice section, she had had little opportunity to put some of her beliefs into action. She particularly emphasised her perceived inability to incorporate spirituality into the art curriculum of the school.

The teachers identified the importance in their practice of developing critical thinking skills. Having respect for one another and developing positive relationships was a common theme in their comments on alignment of personal beliefs and practice. For example:

I believe students need to be able to relate to one another so that they are prepared to be positive members of our society. Values and cultural sensitivity are crucial with global sustainability.

At the heart of everything is an understanding that students learn best from each other in a learning environment carefully nurtured by a supportive, engaging, interested teacher.

Other common examples of belief aligning with practice related to collaboration, tolerance and courtesy, and problem-solving. The teacher educators' responses reflected those of the teachers in that critical thinking skills were seen as fundamental to preparing student teachers for the classroom. However, preparing students to continue to develop and grow throughout their career so that they would become productive members of society, was a more prevalent response.

We are educating our students about all the needs of young people, physical, social, mental and emotional. I believe that students need holistic wellbeing if they are to meet their academic potential and live positively and productively in society as constructive citizens.

We must give our students a passion for learning, the ability to ask the difficult questions and a sense of inquiry.

Although the majority of teaching is geared towards course learning outcomes, other values such as being a positive member of society and reaching their own potential is more often implicitly taught or caught through an interest in the teaching profession.

I work to make connections for my students to their experiences and then build on these to make further connections with values and world issues so that will, I hope, promote critical thinking and provoke responses to things students may or may not have considered.

Teacher education for the future

Only 14 respondents from across the three groups commented on this matter. No common themes emerged in relation to these comments. The only teacher educator to comment thought that creative thinking should be addressed: “We have no idea what kind of world we are preparing young people for, but the more creative they are, the more likely they will be able to adapt.” The teachers’ responses varied. They included such ideas as future education programmes needing to provide guidance on managing students’ behaviours and student teachers needing to gain a sound understanding of pedagogy in order to understand that there are different ways to teach other than the way they were taught themselves.

Alignment of teaching practice with teaching practice needs of future teachers

All respondents indicated (implicitly if not explicitly) that there was a close match between their own practices and those needed in the future. A small number of teachers indicated that they used a constructivist approach along with a variety of other teaching strategies to meet their students’ individual needs. No common theme came through from the small number of teacher educators. Fewer than half of the student teachers responded to this question. Most of those who did respond commented on the need for students to be allowed to “fit in” in the classroom and for the need to provide an environment where all students could participate freely. Two students mentioned the need for students to be equipped with technology skills. Of the few examples of how these needs might be actioned in the classroom, no two were alike.

How teacher education programmes can best prepare future teachers

Nearly all the teachers said that greater contact between ITE programmes and schools would be important in the future. The student teachers indicated a need for greater emphasis on equity. They also stressed the need to establish an awareness of and guidance on how to accommodate classroom diversity, as well as the need to form more links among schools. Teacher educators recommended a stronger focus on consultation and co-construction of ideas by groups of learners. Suggestions held in common across all three respondent groups included the following:

- Strong emphasis on critical thinking and literacy approaches to teaching and learning
- A greater focus on arts and humanities—fostering appropriate values and attitudes
- Getting students beyond “survival mode” and promoting thinking about more global issues
- Promoting the role of the teacher as a co-learning facilitator/promoter of learning who empowers students to take responsibility for their own learning
- Providing exposure to a wide range of delivery modes that focus on individual needs and employ cutting-edge technology
- Stressing the need for teachers to constantly reflect and adapt (several respondents said that co-construction of what is relevant in teacher education programmes should be a top priority for those with leadership roles in education)

One teacher advocated critical thinking and meta-cognition and stressed that this should be a primary focus of teacher education programmes: “Teach the importance of thinking skills. Although subject knowledge is important, it is tuning into how the students learn; [it is] their learning styles that needs addressing.”

The focus of teacher education in the 21st century

The most common calls here across the three groups were for recognition of growing diversity in schools and the provision of teaching methodology able to address this situation. In related vein, respondents also stressed the need to address issues for students with disabilities.

There was, however, no consistent theme among the comments from the low number of respondents who considered the needs of teacher education in the 21st century. The various suggestions offered included and related to environmental education, authentic use of literacy and numeracy, inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning, maintaining a healthy body, the role of education within cultural and political contexts, appropriate pedagogical knowledge, technological awareness and literacy, and life skills, including life-long learning skills. One respondent, emphasising the importance of ensuring students are engaged as life-long learners, observed that “ultimately the aims of education are about giving children a passion for learning, by asking the difficult questions and fostering a sense of inquiry.”

Summary and implications for ITE in New Zealand

This study elicited opinions from three groups of teacher education stakeholders about the aims of education and priorities for future ITE programmes. If the ideas and recommendations that emerged from their responses are to be incorporated into these programmes, we consider that those who provide them will need to address these questions:

1. How can we negotiate our way through the opportunities and constraints inherent in a university-based environment that has to meet the requirements of external agents and changes in the education system?
2. How do we decide on what we value in terms of components of programmes that will promote and enhance the aims of education?
3. How do we model pedagogical processes that align with future education priorities? A strong aspect that emerged from the participants’ comments in this study was the need for teachers in the future to be able to accommodate the diverse needs of the students in their own classrooms. This includes diversity from the perspective of students’ learning needs and the diversity related to school students’ cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This is likely to be the most challenging aspect of teaching in the next decade or so.

The underachievement of Māori students in mainstream settings, addressed in *Ka Hikitia*, has been a priority of the New Zealand government, given that over 85% of Māori students are currently in the mainstream or general school system rather than in *kura kaupapa* or other Māori-medium language-immersion settings (Ministry of Education, 2006). The fact that the New Zealand schooling system has continued to perform less well for Māori students is due, in part, to mainstream teachers having lower expectations of Māori children, failing to identify effectively or reflect on how their practice impacts on the educational experiences of Māori students, and to the limited support available to address these specific issues (Alton-Lee, 2003). ITE programmes in the future will need to focus on culturally-congruent and empowering pedagogies, such as place-based efforts, to produce content that is relevant to and supports the educational aspirations of Māori.

The notion that teachers need to connect with the worlds (cultures) to which students belong is consistent with the principles associated with kaupapa Māori pedagogies (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003) and the Pasifika education priorities of belonging to a learning community (Fletcher *et al.*, 2008). It is also consistent with the view that consultation is a key driver of stakeholder engagement and that providers of education need to acknowledge different cultures and beliefs, respect diversity, facilitate empowerment by identifying and building on strengths, promote the role of whanangatanga¹, fono, family and community in education success and explicitly understand that language is integral to identity and culture (Ministry of Education, 2001). There is also a need to encourage teacher collegiality so that teachers work collaboratively on transformative teaching practices that enhance the learning of Māori and Pasifika students (Ministry of Education, 2006).

As we come to review our own programmes at the University of Canterbury process in terms of the findings of this study and the challenges emerging from them, we acknowledge that we

¹ Collegial support/ family support/ extended family support

will need to consider the first two challenges in terms of balancing good ITE practice with practical constraints. The third challenge emphasises the importance of pedagogical modelling in ITE. The data from this study suggest that the types of modelling required include critical thinking, student-centred approaches, interactive approaches to teaching and learning that enable students to develop relationship and communication skills, and an ability to adapt and develop instructional strategies to meet the needs and interests of students.

These considerations (as well as other emerging shifts in educational emphases) are most likely to be addressed by teacher educators and teachers nationwide if they reflect critically on their practice (Brookfield, 1995; Snook, 2000; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). As such, we maintain that critical reflection also needs to be an explicit part of ITE programmes. Wherever possible, student teachers should be challenged to consider themselves as more than simply classroom performers. They must be knowledgeable about schools and education and be able to evaluate new and existing policies alongside current socio-cultural issues so that they can help to plan a better educational future.

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